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ACCELA
Government Software

focus

ACCELA INAUGURATES “ACCELA AUTOMATOR” AWARDS FOR EXCELLENCE IN GOVERNMENT TECHNOLOGY – part 2 of 3

New awards given to web- and cloud-enabled Accela customers. Accela introduced the “Accela Automate” awards, a new honor bestowed at Accela’s annual User Conference to customers who have deployed the company’s flagship Accela Automation® enterprise software and related solutions to make government easier, faster, and more accessible. Accela revealed the names of the award’s first three recipients announced at the August 2011 User Conference: the [City of Tigard, Ore.](#); [Boulder County, Colo.](#); and the [City of El Paso, Texas](#). The awards were presented by Accela CEO and President, Maury Blackman.

As mentioned last week, we’ll feature one of the award winners each week. This week, we feature the second recipient.

Boulder County: Faster Recovery from Disaster

Boulder County’s Land Use Department (LUD) is focused on providing a range of services – including development review, planning, permits, inspections, mapping services, zoning enforcement, forest health, and more – to a population of approximately 43,000 residing in the unincorporated rural plains, historic town sites, and high mountain communities along the northern Front Range of the Rocky Mountains. The county’s mean residential property values are among the highest in Colorado.

On Labor Day 2010, a wildfire ignited in Fourmile Canyon, a mountainous area just west of the City of Boulder, and spread across 6,180 acres of rugged terrain that includes a mixed mosaic of public and private forested lands, high mountain meadows, and a diverse blend of residential properties. The fire, which ultimately destroyed 169 homes and damaged dozens of other structures, was the most expensive in Colorado history in terms of property losses; and impacted more Boulder County residents than any other disaster in recent years.

Using the county’s Accela Automation system, LUD was able to track comprehensively destroyed property and fire-damaged land, spanning multiple land tracts, including: private property, county open space, as well as state and federal lands. LUD staff leveraged the online Accela user community for suggestions on creating a single new application type to store disaster-related items. From there, LUD staff accessed permitting and property records from Accela Automation to create parcel reports, organize debris cleanup, develop property owner packets containing critical rebuilding information, conduct owner surveys, and finally begin processing reconstruction applications and issuing permits in record time. LUD also began preemptive planning for erosion and flood control by documenting areas of destroyed vegetation that would require mulch and seed treatment. Boulder County’s quick action and strategic planning, with the help of Accela Automation, streamlined the disaster-recovery process.

Accela Automation - An Overwhelming Success

Win a \$50 Gift Certificate to Misty's!

This was the theme of a collaborative meeting facilitated by Jim Walkenhorst. Jim hosted and facilitated an evening discussion with our core Accela consultants, along with Steve Henderson, Mike Lang, and Fred Hoke. The key objective of the meeting was to identify the major ingredients for creating an overwhelming success for the Accela Automation project. The end result of the evening's collaboration was the construction of a project framework listing critical success factors. The general context of the Overwhelming Success Framework is listed below. Now it's your turn to participate in the meeting! For absolute success we need your input and to make this even more fun and interesting we have decided to add a prize.

For the next two weeks we are open to receive your best ideas for filling in the Overwhelming Success Framework below. For every idea that you share, your name will be placed in a hat. For example, you submit 10 great ideas you get your name placed in the hat 10 times. On November 17 Mayor Beutler will randomly draw out the winner's name from a hat. The winner gets a picture with the Mayor, newsletter coverage, and a \$50 gift certificate to Misty's Restaurant!

The context of the framework with some suggestions follows. Feel free to add to the framework, make additional suggestions under each topic, and **remember this is our project...please participate!**

Overwhelming Success Framework

Constancy of Purpose

- Leadership
- Mayor continued expression of vision

Collaboration

- Define & express rules of engagement
- Closer Director SME interaction/presentation

Cultural Change

- Increasing involvement and participation in project across department
- Advanced notice and education of analysis

Commitment

- Increase responsibility
- Increase accountability
- Motivation - participative

Creative Innovation

- Find the innovators
- Empowerment

Communication

- Newsletter (broaden the audience and participation)
- SME participation in weekly project calls to Accela

*Add a category or bullet point to
have a chance to win!*

Coming Soon:

If you have wanted a closer look at what Accela Automation looks like and to learn how to leverage Accela to your advantage, we have something special planned for you!

We are just beginning to work out the details of overview sessions with Accela staff. These overview sessions are being designed with each of you in mind targeting the specific job functions that you perform. This will be an excellent opportunity to first see the product in action, to see how it is being used in another City and then later, we will show you some City of Lincoln specific processes and data. We will make these overview sessions as hands on as possible so that you can begin to see everything in advance. And please, never be shy about asking questions. From our point of view, the more questions we get now the better the implementation will be later. More information about these special sessions will be announced in an upcoming newsletter.

Accela Analysis Center Activities:

Next week is going to be an extremely heavy analysis week. There will be parallel sessions in progress. Matt and Shauna will utilize the Accela Analysis Center and Brenda and Darren will utilize Building and Safety's Conference room. There is an additional benefit to the joint sessions this week. We will have a joint session to discuss impact fees. This is going to be a great opportunity to get more than one department included in this essential process discussion.

Next week Brenda and Darren will be meeting in the Building and Safety Conference Room for the analysis of the following permit types:

- Health 11/8 - Body Art Establishment/Practitioner, 11/9 - Child Care Establishment, 11/10 - Waste Hauler/Special Waste
- PW&U 11/8 - Impact Fees, 11/9 - -Impact Fees Revert 2007

Also, Matt and Shauna will be meeting in the Accela Analysis Center for the analysis of the following permit types:

- Planning 11/8 - Waiver/Use Permit -Amendment, 11/9 - Comp Plan conformance/Street & Alley vacate, 11/10 - Comp Plan Amendment/Street Name Change
- Building & Safety 11/8 - Meter Hoods & Mobile Signs, 11/9 - apartment Licenses/Places of Assembly, 11/10 - Tent Certificate of compliance

As we are working our way through 80 permit types in the Accela lead analysis session there is a parallel effort underway to do analysis work on 60 other permit types. These additional permit types are mostly related to Building and Safety permits. Rita Cox has been leading the charge and has made progress on 10 of these remaining permit types. All of the documentation for these and the resulting workflows, Word and Visio documents will be kept in the project SharePoint directory along with the Accela lead analysis results. In addition, we are collecting the net changes, or benefit statements for all 140 permit types. All project details are kept in one place, collaboration and all, in SharePoint. At the end of the project this information will be downloaded to our own directories at the City.

Accela Weekly Reports:

Accela has begun weekly reporting practices. The weekly status report has multiple features including risk issues, phase progression, milestone notes, status and completion dates, and a declining travel balance. The status report also uses stoplight colors: **green** for on items on track, **yellow** on issues of caution and **red** for those issues which need immediate attention. This report will track project progress and indicate the previous and current week's tasks in motion.



ACCELA VISITORS

On Tuesday, October 25th, Jim Walkenhorst, Project Manager, and Dan Kalt, Tony Palizzi and Rocky Copeland – all of Accela, gathered to discuss some functions of the Accela conversion. Some features under examination are Crystal Reports, contractor license processes, and an enterprise complaint system.

Question of the Week:

This week we wanted to spotlight a great example of the kind of thoughtful responses we get to the newsletter by including one entire response that we received from Public Works & Utilities own Jared Nelson. Jared writes:

Jim,

I appreciate the Accela Newsletters and the information you're sharing. I was also glad to see information related to EDMS. The newsletter said to send you suggestions and comments on potential challenges, so I offer you my input:

Document Management Systems are the future. I believe the success of Accela will depend on the ability to incorporate document management and/or adjust to future alterations to accepting and working with electronic documents. It's hard to predict exactly what the future holds; but having an Accela system that is fully adaptable to many different formats and changes in the future will be great. At some point, people could be editing documents with their phones, or tablet devices, and the wireless world will expand exponentially... this is where the public/developer/and City employees probably will be heading, It will be a challenge to keep adapting to this. Suggestion: use a DMS that is versatile, adaptable, and easy to change/manipulate. One example is the review/comment/markup features on Adobe's platform. If the City finds a need to migrate away or move towards Adobe, a program/system that would be easy to adapt to future technology would be good.

I think the questions you raise in the latest Newsletter are all great topics and should be considered. Metadata would be good to have. A larger limit on document sizes would be good; converting document types would be great. Using OCR and having each document/text being searched would be awesome! Better yet, have it all be indexed.

The ability to manipulate date in Accela is a key feature and would be a challenge in the future if the system does not cater to it. I don't know what the City will be able to do or not do; but I've heard that Charlotte, VA has had trouble exporting data out of their Accela program. It's going to be beneficial if different departments/ divisions can export and import datasets for other purposes. For example, exporting/importing to a "csv" or "dbf" would be good.

I hope I'm not too vague. I do follow some of this technology. Thanks for the opportunity to give you my thoughts. I appreciate it.

Jared Nelson, PE
City of Lincoln, Public Works & Utilities
Watershed Management Division

"Discipline is the bridge between goals and accomplishment."
Jim Rohn



QUESTION OF THE WEEK: E-mail: What is the best way to communicate changes in our business practices with our Customers?
jwalkenhorst@lincoln.ne.gov

Next week's Question of the Week prize is a great Accela notebook and fancy writing pen!

Please print a copy of this newsletter for staff who do not have e-mail.

JIM WALKENHORST
PROJECT MANAGER

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PROJECT SPONSOR